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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## Guard supports state emergency management agencies in wake of fall blizzard

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard is currently conducting five separate missions in support of state emergency management agencies in the wake of the fall blizzard that hit western South Dakota over the past couple of days.

A National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and crew are conducting a medical evacuation of four civilians, three of which require dialysis, from Wanblee, S.D., to the Pine Ridge Hospital. One UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and crew are supporting a reconnaissance mission with the governor and other emergency management officials to assess ground conditions over western South Dakota. Two snow blowers with crews from the Guard's Task Force 114 from Sioux Falls were dispatched to support snow removal west along Interstate 90 toward Rapid City. Task Force 196, also from Sioux Falls, is supporting TF114 in providing transport of the snow blowers and two 10-ton recovery wreckers with crews to support the clearing of the interstate. Rapid City's Task Force 109 dispatched two snow blowers with crews to assist in the clearing of Interstate 90 from Rapid City westward toward Sturgis.

Army and Air National Guard leaders across the state continue to prepare Soldiers and Airmen to respond to five possible missions that the Guard may receive from the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management over the next few days. Guard officials are preparing to respond to search and rescue missions, snow removal support, power restoration support, power generator equipment requests, and aerial observation missions using National Guard's rotary and fixed-wing aircraft.

National Guard support is based on the needs and requirements vetted through the Office of Emergency Management, which is the lead agency for all state emergency response.

The Guard has numerous pieces of snow removal equipment that include snow blowers, loaders, bulldozers, road graders and dump trucks are located throughout the state to support the state's emergency response.

The South Dakota National Guard has more than 4,000 Soldiers and Airmen available to respond to state emergencies, natural disasters and homeland defense.

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